


CLAUDE KOCH:  
A Poet's Portfolio

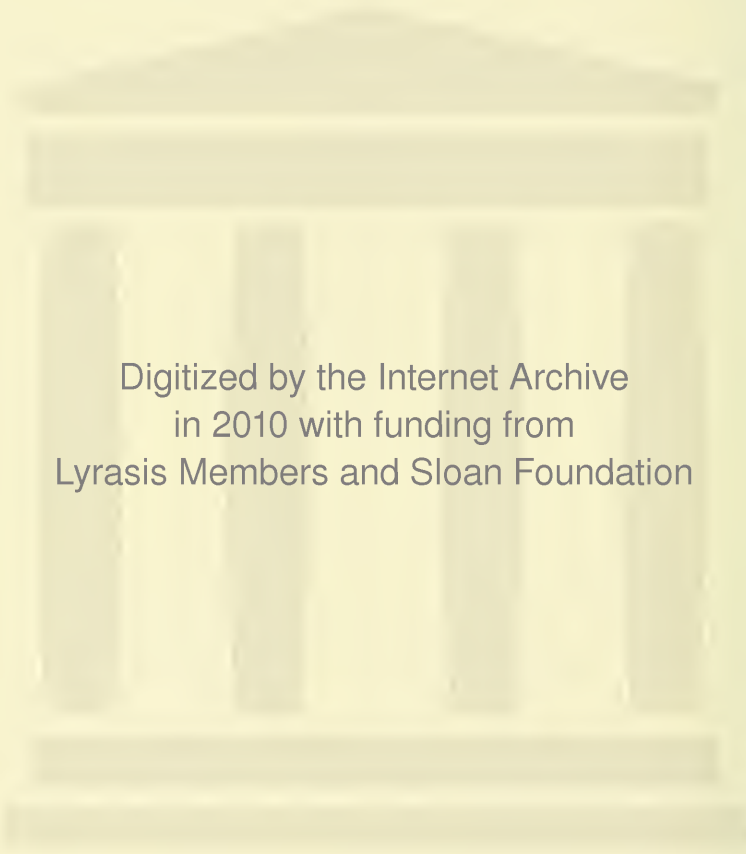
*Four*  
  
*Quarters*

VOL. XXII

SUMMER 1973

No. 4

75 CENTS



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# Four Quarters

VOL. XXII, No. 4

SUMMER, 1973

PUBLISHED BY THE FACULTY OF LA SALLE COLLEGE

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Cover: "Claude Koch," *pencil sketch by James Hanes*

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*Published four times a year in Autumn, Winter, Spring, Summer by the faculty of La Salle College, 20th & Olney Aves., Phila., Pa. 19141. Subscriptions: \$3.00 annually. Single copies: \$.75. © 1973 by La Salle College. Unsolicited manuscripts must be accompanied by stamped self-addressed envelope. The editors cannot accept responsibility for lost or damaged manuscripts beyond that of reasonable care for materials received. Second-class postage paid at Phila., Pa.*

# Marginalia . . .

## COVERT OPERATION

*Do you remember when the American Legion used to sponsor essay contests in which kids wrote on "What the Flag Means to Me"? Next election eve all Americans should sit down and write their essay on "What Watergate Means to Me."*

*By the time this appears, there is a good chance that you will be fed up with reading about Watergate. Think of this, therefore, not as a piece on Watergate but as an essay on the corruption of language and its relation to the corruption of thought and morals. The wisest observations on this subject have been made by George Orwell. "If thought corrupts language," said Orwell, "language can also corrupt thought," And corrupt thought leads to corrupt action.*

*That is what Watergate means to me, you see. I look at those hearings and think, "How can people like these—people who should know better—get enmeshed in a net of crime and deception?" The answer lies in the public relations approach to government that has reached new heights (or depths) in the current administration, though it has by no means been limited to the present government. It is no coincidence that so many of the White House staff were trained in advertising agencies rather than in the precincts. Their expertise is in using language to manipulate rather than to communicate.*

*"In our time," Orwell wrote prophetically in "Politics and the English Language," political speech and writing are largely the defense of the indefensible." The less defensible the actions, the greater the need for a rhetoric of confusion.*

*The Viet Nam war (known vaguely as "the U. S. involvement") therefore provided the ideal laboratory for research and development in political euphemisms designed to hide disturbing realities. Our first soldiers in Viet Nam were "advisers," until that term was made laughable by sheer numbers. The actual effects of the war on human beings were masked in such jargon as "pacification" and "protective reaction strikes." The Cambodian invasion became the "Cambodian incursion."*

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# Claude Koch

## A Portfolio

In November, 1951, Volume I, Number 1, *Four Quarters* published "Brief Candle," a poem by Claude Koch. Since that time, Koch's work has appeared with regularity in these pages and in those of other quarterlies. In the last fifteen years, however, his interest has been mainly fiction. He has published four novels, is now working on a fifth, and his short stories have appeared in such magazines as the *Sewanee Review*, the *Antioch Review*, the *Northwest Review*, and the *Delta Review*. His first novel, *Island Interlude* (1951) won the Dodd Mead Intercollegiate Literary Fellowship. Other honors followed. He received the Catholic Press Association's award for the best short story of the year for "Rest Camp" in 1951 and was named a Sewanee Fellow in 1957, and a Rockefeller Foundation Fellow in 1966. One of his stories, "A Matter of Family," is included in *Craft and Vision: The Best Fiction From The Sewanee Review*, edited by Andrew Lytle (1972).

A reading of Koch's fiction reminds one constantly that the author began as a poet, and that the sensibility of the poet, his love of language and symbol, shapes each fictional effort. One finds in the early poems published in *Spirit* and *Four Quarters* in the early 1950's a concern for many of the same themes that pervade the later fiction: religion and a sense of mystery; family love; the sea; the past that lives on in the present.

The portfolio of poems presented in this issue marks his return to the craft of poetry. All are new poems, part of a volume now in preparation.

In technique they continue to demonstrate Koch's concern for traditional forms. The rhymes are often intricate, the rhythms usually regular. To the experienced reader of contemporary poetry, they will appear to be clearly in the tradition of the academic poets such as Wilbur, Nims, and Warren. The allusions are literate, often erudite. The metaphors are intricate, the themes philosophical.

To describe a poet as an "academic" is in the lexicon of many contemporary poets and critics the ultimate pejorative. Since the early 1950's, there has been a reaction against the Pound-Eliot influence which has led some to consider traditional verse forms as decadent. In the poems in this portfolio, Claude Koch demonstrates (if indeed it ever required demonstration) how vital the traditional forms remain as instruments in the hands of the skilled craftsman.

—J.J.K.

For Bro. Edward Patrick Sheekey, F.S.C.

*Venerato amico cuius praesentia docet*

## Model

She poses to his hand:  
Light madder, rose,  
The ivory of Cadiz—  
Her colors dear to life,  
Her careless pose  
An art embracing his

(As nature is to art—  
Or so they say),  
Ingenuously lax.  
And for his part,  
The shaping of his hand  
Can nudge the chalk to life.

When mannerly he lays  
The colors on, the flax  
Reflects its former mode  
(Not canvas now; but thread  
Staid to understand  
By which hangs life).

It is her way and his  
To correspond in this  
Grand alchemic reprise:  
In all the plays of light  
Her body frees,  
He touches Adam's hand.



## Sea Sorrow

Fog down through Anglesea and Avalon,  
Buoys clang at Brigantine, piers thump and jounce;  
Laid on by wind through Seagirt, Loveladies,  
Dark spasms of the sea that quake and pounce

Possess and send one fleeing. It's the heart  
Whose tides are failing; wherein honed,  
Earth's looming bulkheads early humble down.  
How soon gold yarrow laced beside the dunes  
Buds, like the sea too inwardly, to change  
And beat upon the bone like scud—or wings  
Of butterflies in tidal pools drift lachrymal  
and strange.

Alone deep landfall stays the drift of things:  
Now slyly past Marmora lugs the sun  
From white Whale Beach where whales no longer blow.  
Imagine though: that off-shore breeze (how like  
A mistress with her pillow) plumps the trees  
And whispers sleep

Far inland

Now

At Tuckahoe.

## The Donne Triptych

(*Hans Memlinc, 1468*)

Displayed the collar of the Rose and Sun,  
The white lion sejeant of the House of March,  
The langued gules and argent wolf of Donne,  
And Hasting's sable maunch (through Bess, his wife);

Arrived at Damme from Carmarthenshire  
This knight, Sir John, with Welsh Elizabeth—  
Slight, dark, and anxious, on the eve of life,  
His daughter in his train, purportedly  
To witness Charles the Bold of Burgundy  
Unite with Meg of York — and took for hire  
Hans Memlinc's art that year before his death;

Posed with St. Barbara's tower and the catherine  
Wheel, and tapestry upon a portico  
With which his world nor ours had aught to do,  
The Wars of Roses fading for a breath  
(The time it took the red-capped Hans to lean  
His own sly portrait toward the paneled scene,  
To piety an audience of one);

Knelt in this jeweled light stern Sir John Donne,  
His worried eyes on neither child nor wife,  
Nor saw the robed madonna nor the saints,  
The playful angels nor the reaching Christ,  
The peace beyond the world Hans Memlinc paints;

And so excludes us all: we are the man  
And wife, the innocent and thoughtless daughter,  
Who dare not raise their glance to angel's laughter,  
An apple for the Christ, the dancing swan,  
The white horse in the meadow peace proposes—

But must look inward to the tearing of the roses.



## Summer Houses

How delicate the dream of summer houses!  
Bone white as clam, conch, or sea mallow,  
Scantlings (thin as stalks of wheat or yarrow)  
And lathes tilt toward the sunlight, and the purlin

Firm as hope is bleached beneath the roof-tree;  
This ship of land, of mind, beached like a wherry  
And spare with all the lightness sleep imposes,  
Catches at the breath like autumn roses.

And in the dream blue mussels cling to pilings  
While round-about the mole crabs burrow, and  
The long-necked egret steps the marsh; the sand  
Now isolate, how Merlin-like (salt at the lips)

Yourself when always young conjure the golden ships.  
Say: is it light that bends wood toward the sun?  
Illusion of the eye? Or joy to cope  
With all the sweet extravagance of hope?

## Witness

Trials of Jove or Job,  
The knots intricate  
Binding gifts and love,  
The earth's fair seasonal robe—  
Her spirit contemplates;  
And when the time is fit,  
The satin slip of slates  
Is garment to her mood;

Or mulberries that stain  
With careless, regal dye  
In the dousing summer rain.  
The textures and the shapes  
Of summer are her season:  
She has the loving eye  
That witness is. She keeps  
Her waiting heart to lesson.

Char autumn is her season:  
She breathes its *memorare*;  
The lances of its passion  
That penetrate the marrow  
Find her a willing victim;  
Her being is *laudare*,  
As grateful as a sparrow.  
Her body is a plectrum

That parts its splays of light.  
And what though winter lours?  
Her ways are praise of it:  
Dour winter is her season.  
The joy of a house that's tight,  
The patient, slumbrous hours,  
The icicles of wit  
That circumvent with reason

Discomfitures of flesh:  
These are her winter witness.  
Her prayer is for the makers  
Who fitted jointures right.  
When spring, that raucous hawker  
Of life in blowsy March,  
Falls tranquil and tricks listless  
Youth to leap love's gate,

The season of her fate  
Is no less spring than other:  
She loves, and in her hair  
Entangles Vesta's wreath;  
She is, and what is fair  
Is in her being's weather.  
Burgeoning soon or late  
All to her hand is wealth.

My lady frail and still  
To gods and men bears witness.  
Life in its bubble of air  
Lives on her honeyed breath  
The mortal world in its care;  
It is she who preserves from death  
What gods and men have willed:  
In her, swift life has fitness.

## Lansdale Ladies

Two hundred years! To measure  
Such fresh antiquity  
The Lansdale ladies flutter  
Grandmother's furbelows,

And yard by frilly yard  
They treasure earth and clothes  
As ostentatious wards  
Of urban memory.

The Lansdale ladies weather  
No better than their mothers;  
They earn, in piety,  
But glances from their brothers.

But now they have grown frailer,  
Almost have lost their way  
In haunted organdy  
And what was meant as play;

Now gentler and demurer,  
Tight-bodiced and sedate,  
Shy revenants of fate  
They are their own restorers,

They are their own betrayers . . .  
Their whispers are like leaves  
Across a face, not theirs,  
Whose element is shade.

They feel almost reprov'd  
As among the fables move  
Their children's children's loves  
Through the marigold of day.

## Beach Boy

He hears tales sough through peppermint parisols;  
Sequences of the sea and horns of time  
Trumpet to him alone. He dares  
The devil's needle sewing up the mouth,  
The bad medusae brushing at the thigh,  
Rash hippocampi, the ambiguous wash  
  before light fails;  
Attends his barricade of sand to eye  
Through evening's scattering of clouds and us  
His Field of the Cloth of Gold, its grand  
Pavilions struck. Companions long beguiled,  
Bone weary both of indolence and fuss,  
Trail cloaks and ornamental lances  
  down the dunes.  
Now lord alone, the last unchastened child  
Hazards against the sea his castle of sand.

## The Women

Have I remembered or imagined them—  
Over the wooden iceboxes, enameled stoves,  
Beneath the filaments of mazda lamps,  
Their grey heads bent, their features in repose:  
Mothers and wives, half-glimpsed through back windows  
Of long brick rows of Philadelphia houses?

Perhaps a sweater or a shawl thrown over  
Shoulders fragile as my thought of them;  
Sometimes their scored and blunted hands at tasks  
As seasonal as visitations of the flowers;  
And once at least, an emblem in her grasp  
Shaped like a heart and pierced, I saw one hold

A velvet red pin cushion set in gold.  
Sometimes they grope, abashed, for spectacles,  
Fumble sometimes, are all thumbs pricked by needles;  
Have cats that tumble out thimbles and hanks  
From wicker sewing baskets. Time has told:  
I cannot whisper to these shades my thanks

Among the crystal and the old cut glass  
Of compotes, veneered radios,  
The tiffany-enfracted light on gross oak tables;  
I can't redeem that moment—let it pass.  
Such as they were (and if they were), I know  
One lives in me beyond excuse of fable.



## Revenants

*"Love's Night Is Noon"*

—*Twelfth Night* (III.i. 160)

Love's night—not always noon, but after  
When the lunar light has westered  
And the moon arranges shadows from the west:  
One lives to it, faintly master, mainly drifter.

First, that surreal time preluding darkness  
(Perhaps its immanence, the antic sun,  
Or the deceiving eye) emboldens  
Figures on a jetty, opalescence;

Then a scattering of silver on the water  
(Spanish silver surfacing); fluorescence  
Introducing moonlight, and below one's  
Feet the street lamps signing dunes of sand

Like negatives of night on standing water.  
Laughter. Love's night is noon then. Let noon alter  
Nothing; let it bind to the prophetic  
Wheeling of its flight the son, the daughter.

But after? Look! The failing moon planes westward:  
One's shadow with the pain of recognition  
Enlarges to accommodate a daemon  
(Each yearning, hopeful, burdened, shaping gesture)—

of father? mother? master?

# Springs

The literary spring is cruel  
And maiden-like (no paradox)  
But actual spring is difficult—  
Arrives like battering through a box.

Then asphodels, anemones,  
The scent of pitch on cursive roofs,  
A dizziness of green in trees  
(While out of hearing slide the hooves

Of centaurs), flaking paint on slats,  
And all the antecedent rains  
Of failing winter trouble us  
In whom the season stirs like pain.

How humbly we wipe clean our slates  
In bodies where the veins have broken  
Beyond repair; the violets waken  
Bewildering hope in the purling air:

And then the actual spring, not cruel  
Nor maiden-like, becomes our fault—  
The burden of the difficult  
(Its joyous paradox) our carol.

## Pieter Bruegel at Imhof's Restaurant

("Peasant Wedding," 1568, and "The Peasant Dance")

Featured thin as loons  
Or moon-faced and inebriate,  
Pieter Bruegel's peasants and his rude buffoons  
Hang above our glassware and our plate.

Between the entree and desert,  
Between the first martini and the last liqueur,  
These silent reckonings of things that were  
Remark upon our state.

Across the unplumbed years they comment—paper crown  
Above a simpering bride, a mean-faced groom,  
And in a stuffy room  
Toasts to the King of Beer gone 'round.

Who gathers at the harvest table now?  
The piper pipes a tune;  
The red-capped child who licked the plate has gone to bed  
(Peacock feather on his head)

With History and rune,  
Displaced as Pieter's peasant wedding did the cow.  
We do not know the *kermesse* Bruegel knew  
(Thank God for that—it's just as well—

They were a noisy crew, and fry in hell  
As he made clear elsewhere).  
And yet, considering temptations of the Fair,  
It's doubtful that we do as well

As they have done by being there  
(What if the tray is a dismantled door;  
What if the clay jugs reek upon the pestilent floor,  
And stolid children wear

A doll-like, idiot, vacuous stare;  
And desperate, angry dancers thump the ground like doom)—  
Who will commemorate us late or soon  
Who dine with genteel care?

But, Christ! That out of such vulgarity and press,  
This line, so clean-limbed and so true,  
Should come, and Pieter's forthright comeliness,  
And—Mother of God—the blue!

# The Hollyhock Doll

ANNABEL THOMAS

**O**UT WHERE the hollyhocks bloomed tall in the orchard, Dorcas lay full-length in the long wet grass. Little by little as she waited, the crickets and the tree toads, the screech owl and the whippoorwill started up again. But not the frogs in the pond. They were more heedful.

Dorcas rested her chin on the good-smelling earth and her hair, wet from the dew, hung down over the bank as if it grew there amongst the rushes. When at last the frogs started in, a thousand different frog voices came spreading up from the water.

The little noises came into her head and filled it and into her whole self and filled that. Fuller and fuller. She would burst open and her ragged ends spread out there and there over the evening sky. In the house, the baby slept.

**I**N TOWN, Corene switched on the lamp by the couch, intending to read there. The night was ugly with the heat. She stood like a stout resentful kewpie, pouting at the couch.

"God, even after all this time, I can't sit there," she said. "Because that's where he died. On that very spot. On a Saturday night. Eating popcorn, for godsake, popcorn!"

She stalked across the room and plopped her bottom down into the yellow plastic chair. She pulled a hankie from up her sleeve and wiped her upper lip.

"Corene, is that you? Is that you in the parlour? Corene? It's ten o'clock. Have you looked at a clock lately? My alarm clock says it's ten minutes after ten o'clock."

"Mama, for christsake. I'll come to bed in a minute, Mama."

"I can't sleep with you kerwhanging around the parlour all

hours. I lay here on my back day and night and it - -"

"I know you lay there on your back, Mama."

Corene had picked up the newspaper from the yellow footstool and was turning the pages over slowly.

"I'm a woman eighty-four years old, I want you to - -"

"I know you're eighty-fo--"

"Eighty-four years old. And what have I got to show. A paralyzed back and a ungrateful daughter, that's you, Corene, and not one grandchild."

Corene dropped the paper like a sheet of hot tin and sat staring straight before her stuffing her hankie up her sleeve.

"I'm going up to the Cutrate," she said.

"It's ten minutes after ten o'clock at night."

Corene got up out of the yellow chair and stood in front of a small round mirror hanging over the sewing machine. She licked her little finger and ran it twice over one eyebrow.

"Bring me a glass of water to put my teeth in," her mother said.

Corene went into the kitchen which was very small and curtained in blue plastic ruffles, and turned on the spigot. She got two glasses from the cupboard, filled both. She set one on the sink board and used the other to gargle with after adding a few drops of amber liquid to it from a bottle. She gargled without tilting back her head much and with one arm propped akimbo.

On her way out of the kitchen with the other glass of water, she picked up a small brown paper bag from the kitchen table. In the parlour she set the glass of water down on the sewing machine, opened the paper bag and took out three pink paper geraniums all wound on the same green stem. Staring into the mirror she pinned the geraniums onto the front of her dress.

"Here I can't move up off this bed and I got to ask twenty times before anybody will fetch in one glass of water to put my teeth in."

"Mama I got two hands and two feet, for your information. What happened to the glass to put your teeth in I brought you at noon?"

Corene carried the water into the bedroom and set it on the dresser.

"My God, Mama, what do you absolutely have to have these ferns just about on top of your bed for. They drip on the rug and they smell like rotten apples."

She moved two large ferns in red clay pots off the night stand, put them on the window ledge and put the glass of water

on the night stand. The bedroom was very small, done in paper with ovals of George and Martha Washington. The old woman, propped up in a hospital bed, looked quite dead except for her bright restless eyes. She had on a purple dress.

"Them ferns is my company."

"What happened to the water glass I brought you at noon?"

"Dr. Deleweese was here. While you was to the store. He gave me a white pill to take. It was long, like this. About this long. He took and broke it into and poured the insides into the glass and it phizzed up. So he said, drink it."

"Oh."

"He stayed half an hour."

"What'd he say?"

Corene picked up the alarm clock from the dresser, turned it around to look at it, wound it two turns and set it back.

"He said he still can't tell what's wrong with me. Not exactly, he said. Some nerve trouble. He can't cure it until he finds out exactly, he said. He thought maybe this pill I took will help it. Maybe I'll be able to get up tomorrow. He said he wasn't sure. Here, take my teeth."

Corene took them and put them into the water glass.

"Mouthwash. You smell like mouthwash," her mother said.

Corene watched the bubbles rise from the dentures.

"You ain't used mouthwash since George went, rest him. I said you smell like mouthwash."

"I heard you, Mama."

The old woman turned her head toward Corene quickly and jerkily like a hen.

"What's that you got pinned on you?"

"It happens that I have got a paper geranium pinned on."

"I never seen it before, that geranium."

"I'm going to walk up to the Cutrate."

"It's ten-thirty o'clock, Corene."

"Mama, I know it's ten-thirty o'clock. You want I should crank your bed?"

"Yes, crank it."

By the time Corene had cranked down the bed and switched off the light, the old woman had begun to snore faintly through her mouth.

Corene crossed the parlour and went into her own bedroom. She came out with a subtle and deep expression, stuffing a fresh handkerchief up her sleeve. The handkerchief was bordered with yellow pansies.

Out on the porch, it was hotter even than inside. Before



she stepped off the porch she looked for and spotted the end of Mr. Wilmot's cigar. Her lips loosened down into a secretive line. She stood there a moment straightening the geranium.

Helter-skelter screeching and careening a car burst onto the quiet street. The car radio was playing a blue yodle tuned up louder than a shout. The car, an eight-year-old sedan, ran up over the curb, stopped, stood rocking from side to side. The man in the car stripped the gears, pulled off back onto the street and went on down town in a hurry.

Corene blanched and shook all over. Mr. Wilmot hurried off of his porch and down to the sidewalk and stared after the car. He met Corene when he walked back.

"Did you see that?" he shouted. "Was you watching that? How's your mama?"

"Mr. Wilmot, I told you at half past seven o'clock this evening when I went to the Frozen Food Locker, Mama is the same. She's the same."

"Did you see Edan Allen? That was Edan Allen in that car."

"What on God's earth was wrong with him?"

"He's drinking beer. He's been riding around town in his car since four o'clock drinking store bought beer. He's been throwing out the bottles. He almost hit the Kennerson girl, the cross-eyed one, with a bottle in front of the Pure Oil. She was mad."

Mr. Wilmot took his cigar out of his mouth. He looked at the pink paper geraniums.

"Edan Allen never used to drink much," Mr. Wilmot remarked. "Maybe he is worried about Dorcas finding out."

Corene stared at the red apoplectic splotches on Mr. Wilmot's face.

"Mr. Wilmot, what would Dorcas care if he drinks beer? A half-Indian, for godsake, or gypsy or half whatever she is. And no sense at all, let me hasten to add."

"I mean he drinks beer because he's worried Dorcas will find out about his town girl. I meant to say. Half-Indian or not half-Indian, Dorcas's still his wife."

Corene began to move on down the sidewalk. Mr. Wilmot followed her a few steps.

"Or more likely it's his conscience, you know, because she don't suspect."

Corene kept walking. Out of the corner of her eye she saw Mr. Wilmot turn back.

"Mr. Wilmot, I'd appreciate you keeping a eye on Mama

while I run to the Cutrate," she said over her shoulder without stopping.

She did not hear him answer. The roots of the trees had pushed up the sidewalk all along the way in front of her. Up and down the street people were sitting on their porches tilted back in kitchen chairs or creaking to and fro in chain-hung swings or squatting on the top step. A few of them called down asking Corene how her mother was.

Corene remarked to the last person who asked about her mother that Mr. Wilmot was driving her mother out of her mind because "he talks and talks and thinks he *knows* so much, for godsake!"

Downtown the street lights were fluttering behind clouds of bugs. Most of the stores were closed. A row of old men sat on a bench in front of the post office, some of them dozing.

Corene went into the drugstore. She ordered a strawberry ice cream cone. A long-bladed ceiling fan stirred the hot air and pushed it down on top of her head. She took her cone and sat down in a booth at the back of the store. The varnish on the seat was sticky with the heat. She ate the ice cream cone so slowly it melted and ran down over her fingers.

She watched the door. A fly ran down her arm on quick feet. The counter girl was reading a confession magazine. Corene got up and bought a magazine and returned to the booth. She sat turning over the pages slowly staring at the cigarette ads and the colored recipe illustrations.

After she had been in the booth almost an hour the door opened. Corene half stood up, stared, and sat back down on the sticky varnish. It was the counter girl's boy friend. He straddled a stool with his elbows on the counter. The girl put her head close to his, leaning across the chewing gum display. They whispered.

Corene glanced at the door. No one came in. She turned over five magazine pages rapidly. The counter girl and her boy friend giggled. They stole glances at Corene.

The wall of the booth was riddled with penciled initials. There was a heart drawn with lipstick. An obscene word had been cut in it with a knife. At a quarter to twelve, Corene got up and walked out of the drugstore. She stood with small tears of disappointment in her eyes, looking up and down the street. The lights in the drugstore went out.

After a while the counter girl and her boy friend came out. The girl locked up the door and they went off down the street together.

Corene looked up and down the street and started to walk home. She had only gone a few steps when she heard a great crash and stopped to see what it was.

At twelve fifteen the eight-year-old sedan that had been careening around town all evening ran through the plate glass window of the Farmers' Savings Bank. It set off the bank's alarm system.

Everybody in town woke up. Pretty soon most of them got dressed and went down to the bank to see what was going on. The car radiator was smashed clear into the side of the teller's cage. The trunk and spinning rear wheels of the car were still out on the sidewalk.

Edan Allen, a husky sunburned fellow with ears flat to his head, was sitting behind the shattered windshield bleeding down onto the runningboard. He appeared to be studying a sign on the bank wall in front of him that said, "\$10,000 maximum insurance for each depositor. Member Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation." He was, however, dead. His chest had been crushed by the steering wheel.

The bank's alarm kept on ringing. It began to get on people's nerves. No one knew how to shut it off. They sent a boy to wake up the head teller who knew how to shut it off.

They sent another boy out into the country to fetch Edan's wife, Dorcas. The town marshal and the volunteer fire department tried to get Edan out of the car but he was pinned in. They all worked hard at it, sweating their shirts black because of the intense heat while the rest of the people, with more coming all the time, stood around and gave advice on how to get the job done.

**I**T WAS a wonder the boy found Dorcas at all. The Allen shack was wide open, windows and doors, but dark and no one was there. Dorcas was still mooning down by the frog pond.

The boy stood undecided and fidgeting for ten minutes at the end of which time Dorcas walked up out of the orchard carrying six hollyhock stalks and whistling.

"Is that you, Dorcas Ann?"

"Yes, it's me."

She walked up to the boy, peered into his face, then detoured around him to the well and untied the rope. She put her palm against the wooden spindle and let the rope spin out down the well. After a bit there was a cool settling sound far down.

Dorcas laid the hollyhocks on the grass and wound up the

wet rope, grunting as the turning got harder.

"You are standing on my petunia flower bed," she remarked to the boy. "In the middle."

He stepped backward. The petunias were growing in the hole of a rubber tire laid on the ground. After a while the tin cylinder came out of the well. It dripped and sweated ice cold water. Dorcas set it down in an enamel pail and the water poured into the pail.

She took out the cylinder and picked up the hollyhocks and stuck them down into the bucket.

"Now is when you tell me what you want," she said.

The boy watched her dry her hands on her thighs before he said anything.

"They want you should come into town."

"What in Sweet Jesus for?"

"Edan took and run through the plate glass window of the Farmers' Bank building with his car. Just now."

Dorcas made a soft wordless sound.

"Is he kilt?"

"I don't know. I come straight off here. They sent me to fetch you down there. To see about it."

Dorcas looked at her feet.

"I got to put some shoes on and get the baby."

She went into the shack and returned at once wearing a pair of men's work shoes with the baby straddling her hip still asleep. The boy and Dorcas walked to town in silence through hot moonlight. They went single file down the dirt road. The baby's hair reflected the moon color in a mist around its head. It slept all the way.

When Dorcas and the boy reached the Pure Oil gasoline station, they could hear the bank alarm still ringing. The crowd around the bank was so thick they couldn't see the car until they pushed in and touched the rear bumper.

The people, seeing who it was, fanned back a little. Dorcas stood beside the car and peered into the front seat where the volunteer fire department was still trying to get Edan out. They had a blowtorch and were using it on the dashboard.

Dorcas looked at Edan. Then she looked up and down the faces of the men and women standing around the car. Her face had a closed pondering expression.

"I wish to God they'd shut off that bell," said a woman.

One of the volunteer firemen who had been lying on his back in the front seat came out and used his shirt tail to wipe his face.



"It's going to take six hours to cut him loose," he said staring in his hand at the tail of his shirt. "Six goddamn hours. Anyway."

The baby stirred on Dorcas's hip and whimpered softly like an animal.

"That pore lamb don't know what it's lost," a woman said.

Dorcas turned around and looked at the woman solemnly.

"That's God's truth," she said, impressed. "That's God's own truth."

At four-thirty in the morning the volunteer fire department told Dorcas to go on home. By that time most of the people were back in bed asleep. The head teller had finally been located and had come and turned the alarm off. It was very quiet after that.

They had rolled the sedan out of the bank and into the street where glass fell off of the running boards into the gutter. Dorcas sat down on somebody's kitchen chair and the baby went to sleep over her knees bottom side up.

When they told her to go along home, Dorcas got up and walked around the car until they finally got Edan out of it and carried him off. Then she started home through the fields. The baby, a boy about one year old, woke and wanted down. The sun was not up yet but it was hot. Dorcas took off the baby's nightdress and let him run away over the ground.

He wandered farther and farther ahead until she began to jog after him into the weakening dark. She caught him near the shack on the banks of a small muddy creek. She picked him up. The baby blew little warm breaths against her cheek while he wiggled to get down again. His very soft hair fell across her mouth.

Dorcas set the baby down with his feet in the cool running water. He looked at her with never a smile, his brown eyes wondering. He walked up out of the water studying his feet. He fell asleep at once when Dorcas put him to bed inside the shack.

Dorcas went into the front room where she looked into one or two closets and lifted up a black stone crock from the table and set it down again. She took off her shoes on the front stoop and walked out into the yard. The sunrise wind was in the pear tree, the grass, the bushes.

The sky lightened slowly. The orchard trees shook loose of their shadow and every single rock and grass and piece of chicken dung in the yard was plain. How stiff and hard her face felt! How the lines of it hurt her! But she had no other way to hold it at this minute.

She turned back into the shack. In the kitchen she pushed a pot of cold boiled coffee over a burner. From a tumbler on the table she counted out three, four, five toothpicks and put them into her pocket. She got a small sharp kitchen knife from the cupboard and carried it out the back door.

By the well the hollyhocks stood propped in a pail of water leaning against the well cover. Dorcas picked out a red hollyhock with three big flowers and took it over to the back steps and sat down. She was very careful. She took off the flowers, each one without tearing, and a bud and arranged them in a pile at her feet.

She stuck one toothpick through all the flowers and the top of it into the bud. She made arms and legs out of the other toothpicks, poking them into the flowers. She cut a face on the bud.

Dorcas carried the doll into the kitchen and poured out a cup of coffee and set it on the table. She took the doll on into the baby's room and set its flower skirt over one knob on the foot of the crib where the baby would see it when he woke up.

Back in the kitchen she sat down at the table and drank out of the cup. On the stove, the coffee bubbled up the sides of the pot and out over the top. After she had drunk up the coffee in the cup, she hadn't a thing in the world to do until the baby woke up and it was time for breakfast.

CORENE got home at about two o'clock in the morning. A few people were still hurrying off downtown. One or two heads stuck out of second story windows. The bank alarm system had just stopped ringing.

She climbed the steps to her porch slowly with her back slightly bent over like a person either tired or old.

"Hey, Corene."

Corene stopped on the porch and turned around.

"Mrs. Wilmot? What in the wide world are you standing over here in our bushes for at two A.M. in the morning, Mrs. Wilmot?"

"I was watching for you to come home, dear, because I wanted to rest your mind on the score of your mama. Floyd and me has been taking turns downtown and watching your mama. At the moment she's sleeping like a baby, bless her. Floyd is downtown."

"Well, thanks until you're better paid, Mrs. Wilmot, I'm sure."



"You're welcome. It's so quiet, ain't it? I mean now."

"Yes. That goddamned Ralph Lester was watching the TV all the way over at his brother-in-law's, the one that's on social security, and they just about gave up finding him to shut the alarm off."

"Well, I'm glad he come and done it."

The street was in heavy shadow. The dark lay concentrated and palpable in the foliage of the trees. The two o'clock quiet was so noticeable it seemed everybody in town was sitting around their houses holding their breaths for fear or curiosity or wonderment.

Mrs. Wilmot cleared her throat, started to speak, and cleared it again.

"Well, I guess I'll go downtown, dear, see can I locate Floyd. But, say, I want you to know, Corene, we feel so sorry for you."

"Mrs. Wilmot, a lots of people, even in this very town, has got their bedfast mothers to look after, or their bedfast fathers. I - - -"

"I don't mean your mama, dear. I mean Edan."

Mrs. Wilmot gave Corene's arm three short pats above the elbow. Corene turned around and walked across the front porch to the screen door. Mrs. Wilmot walked out onto the sidewalk and on down toward the center of town, bobbing up and down over the sidewalk pushed up by tree roots.

Corene stepped into the parlour and switched on the two reading lamps. She picked up the newspaper from the yellow footstool, folded it, laid it back down and sat down heavily on the couch.

"Corene, is that you?"

"Yes, Mama. Go back to sleep."

"What's wrong? What's wrong with everybody tonight? I seen the Wilmot's lights on over past twelve o'clock. They always go to bed at nine. And here you're roaming around the parlour at half after two in the morning."

"It's the heat, Mama, is all. I expect people can't sleep when it's so - - -"

"No sir. There's something going on, Corene. Come in here. I want you to crank the bed. I want to know what all is going on. I heard a noise like a - - - well sort of a buzz. And I seen some people all going downtown. A lot earlier. Here I am on this bed struck down with nerve trouble and nobody will even so much as tell me - - -"

"You ain't struck down with nerve trouble, Mama. You had a stroke, for godsake."

Corene picked up the newspaper and fanned her face with it vigorously.

After a while her mother said, "Did you say stroke, Corene?"

"Well, yes. The fact of the matter is, Mama, you've had two. It just once in a while seems to me a woman of eighty-four years old would know when she's had two strokes."

There came a pause between them in the conversation. It grew into a silence. The silence spread from the two women until it held the whole house.

Corene laid the newspaper across her lap and blew her nose on her handkerchief. When she stood up the paper fell off her lap to the floor. She let it lay.

She switched off the two reading lamps, walking heavily across the floor from one to the other. She stood in the dark stuffing the ball of her handkerchief up under her right sleeve. Her mother began to snore gently from the other room.

Corene wondered when, for godsake, the Wilmots were going to come home from downtown and turn their back porch light off and go to bed.

# Holden and Alex: A Clockwork from the Rye?

BARBARA SEVERIN-LOUNSBERRY

AT RADIO City Music Hall in New York, Holden Caulfield, the teenage protagonist in J. D. Salinger's novel *The Catcher in the Rye*, sees a movie "so putrid" he can't take his eyes off it (p. 138).<sup>1</sup> The movie is "about this English guy, Alec something, that . . . loses his memory in the hospital and . . . comes out of the hospital carrying a cane and limping all over the place, all over London, not knowing who the hell he is."

Now "so putrid I couldn't take my eyes off it" has been a fairly common reaction of viewers of Stanley Kubrick's faithful adaptation of Anthony Burgess's novel *A Clockwork Orange*, and from readers of the book as well. And *A Clockwork Orange* happens to be about, not an Alec but an Alex who loses "something" in the hospital and wanders all over London at a loss.

Anthony Burgess is an admitted admirer of Salinger's work as his eighth novel, *One Hand Clapping*, attests.<sup>2</sup> The question is: could Holden's suggestion of a story of putrid fascination in *The Catcher in the Rye* have been the seed of inspiration for Burgess's famous novel? Is this literary fertilization of the best possible kind?

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1 J. D. Salinger, *The Catcher in the Rye* (New York: Bantam Books, 1964) All subsequent page references cited in the text refer to this edition. Page citations for Anthony Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange* are from the Ballantine Books edition (May 1972).

2 The title of *Orange's* immediate predecessor, *One Hand Clapping*, is taken from the Zen Koan which Salinger used as the dedication to his short story collection, *Nine Stories*: "We know the sound of two hands clapping. But what is the sound of one hand clapping?" Indeed Burgess extends the Salinger parallel in the novel, and indulges his sense of humor, by naming Janet Shirley's poet-lover, Redvers Glass, as if to suggest that he is Franny, Zooey, Buddy and Seymour's British cousin.

It goes without saying that *The Catcher in the Rye* and *A Clockwork Orange* are different from each other in a number of ways; most remarkably in exemplifying those specific areas of interest which have traditionally separated the American and English novel. Yet careful comparison of the two works reveals that Burgess may have been influenced by more of *Catcher* than just the "wandering Alec" capsulization. In characterization, narrative style, symbolism, structure, and even thematically, *A Clockwork Orange* has much in common with *The Catcher*.

To begin with the obvious, there is the similarity of protagonists. Alex is 15 and Holden, 16, when their stories begin and both are 17 when the novels end. Although they come from different socio-economic classes, both Holden and Alex have well-meaning but ineffectual parents. "They're *nice* and all—I'm not saying that—but they're also touchy as hell," Holden says of his parents (p. 1). He knows, for example, that his mother will "boo hoo hoo" just as Alex's mum does when he's in trouble. Under her varnish of sophistication, Mrs. Caulfield's unspoken feelings about Holden's ejection from Pency quite likely echo Alex's mum's: "Oh, you bad and wicked boy, disgracing us all like this" (p. 134). Both sets of parents, in short, fail to supply the moral leadership and understanding which their sons require. They both serve as commentary on the dissolution of the modern family.

Besides ineffectual parents, Holden and Alex also share disastrous school records. The only difference is that Holden's expulsions are from prep schools while Alex's are from correctional schools. Holden's pennants read "Pency," "Whooton," and "Elkton Hills"; Alex's wall is covered with "South 4," "Metro Corskol Blue Division," and "The Boys of Alpha." Furthermore, both boys hold the same poor opinion of formal education, or as Alex calls school, that great seat of gloopy useless learning" (p. 39).

Alex and Holden—or is it really Burgess and Salinger?—also articulate the same hostility toward the trappings of formalized religion as they do toward formalized education. "If you want to know the truth, I can't stand ministers," says Holden. "The ones they've had at every school I've gone to, they all have these Holy Joe voices when they start giving sermons. God, I hate that. I don't see why the hell they can't talk in their natural voices. They sound so phony when they talk" (p. 100). In *Orange*, Burgess doesn't just talk about phony ministers. He presents one in the spineless, scotch-drinking prison "charles" (chaplain) who exhorts, "Louder, damn you, sing up" to the



convicts during his church services, informs on his "flock" for advancement, and refers to the prison governor reverently as "Himself."

The two novels also reveal a similar paradoxical repulsion-fascination for the motion picture medium. Holden constantly disparages the movies and intimates that his brother D.B. "sold out" by going to write for Hollywood. Yet his frequent references to and knowledge of film specifics suggest that, despite his complaints, he's a hooked movie fan. In fact, he takes in two movies during the three days recounted in *The Catcher in the Rye*. Burgess, too, gives us a paradoxical view of the cinema. In one place in *Orange* comes a strong indication that motion pictures have become debauched and passé in the London of his story:

Going north we came to the filthy old Fildrome, peeling and dropping to bits through nobody going there much except malchicks like me and my droogs, and then only for a yell or a razraz or a bit of in-out-in-out in the dark. We could viddy from the poster on the Filmdrome's face, a couple of fly-dirted spots trained on it, that there was the usual cowboy riot, with the archangels on the side of the US marshall six-shooting at the rustlers out of hell's fighting legions, the kind of hound-and-horny veshch put out by Statefilm in those days. (pp. 24-25)

A pretty depressing view of the medium. Yet 78 pages later Alex remarks, "It's funny how the colours of the like real world only seem really real when you viddy them on the screen" (p. 103). Surely this reveals a fascination with the potential of the medium. A fascination which Holden obviously shares.

Alex, then, reflects views strikingly similar to Holden's on matters of home, school, religion and movies. Striking too is the fact that Burgess has copied Salinger's Huck Finn-type of first person confessional narrator recounting a past experience. Critics who have called Holden a modern day Huck Finn should recognize Alex as their not-too-far-future day counterpart. Holden's four-letter-word-filled conversation in *Catcher*, we should remember, occasioned somewhat the same shockwaves in 1951 as Alex's exotic "Nadsat" combination of Russian and highly onomatopoeic language causes today.

Only in the past three or four years have critics recognized Burgess as the superior linguist he is and *A Clockwork Orange* as a linguistic *tour de force*. But readers should not let *Orange's* exotic language prevent them from realizing how similar in con-

tent Alex's narration is to Holden's. "It was nice . . . I'll say that," "I was just not in the mood," and "I felt a . . . bit sad as you always will when you have to leave a place you've like got used to" sound like standard Caulfield—but these phrases are actually spoken by Alex in *A Clockwork Orange*. Alex's "Bog blast them" translated is simply one of Holden's many "god-damits," and "real bezoomy veck" is Holden's "real madman." In parallel episodes, Alex is "stroked" by a homosexual prisoner and Holden thinks Mr. Antolini's "petting" is homosexual. In each instance the protagonist describes his reaction as "real bezoomy," "madman." This duplication of expression when the Nadsat is stripped away is so striking that one begins to see *Orange's* language not only as a plus to the ear and to the setting of the novel in time, but as a vital device for Burgess in making *his* Holden unique.<sup>3</sup>

In expression, narrative style, situation and opinion, then, we see Holden and Alex as remarkably similar fictional creations. Both are alienated picaresque wanderers in the major metropolises of their respective countries. A further similarity, the one in fact which first caused me to associate the two works, is the repeated references in each novel to the youth's acute senses, particularly the sense of smell. Alex talks about "my sensitive morder or sniffer" and he unfailingly describes the peculiar odor of the jail, the hospital, and practically every new person he encounters just as ten years before, Holden imparted the scent of taxicab, museum, house foyer, even the school stairs.

The delicate sensibilities of both Holden and Alex seem to be offended by dirt, dishevelment, old age, and any other signs of the seamier side of the human condition. "I'm not too crazy about sick people," Holden says. "I don't much like to see old guys in their pajamas and bathrobes anyway" (p. 7). Alex echoes, "I could never stand to see a moodge all filthy and rolling and burping and drunk, whatever his age might be, but more especially when he was really starry [old] like this one was" (p. 20).

In each novel, furthermore, there is one character who particularly offends the narrator. In *Catcher* it is Robert Ackley of the sinus trouble, pimples, lousy teeth, and halitosis (p. 39).

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3 One slight difference between the two "dialects," however, is that in 1951, Holden's speech was filled predominantly with church blasphemies—"goddam" and "chrisssake"—while in 1962, Alex makes greater use of the bodily taboo words "cally," referring to "feces," and "soddy," meaning "fornicating." This difference quite obviously mirrors the change in usage over the eleven year span and testifies to the sharpness of both writer's ears.



In *Orange* it is Dim, the Neanderthal thug. "Looking all dirtied over and too much von [smell] of sweat on him," says Alex, "was one thing I had against old Dim" (p. 31). In contrast, Holden and Alex have what practically amounts to a fetish about neatness and cleanliness. Toothbrushing, for example, comes up frequently in both novels. The youths seem to have a burning need to remain untouched, unsoiled by the maculate world around them. Yet here Alex parts company from Holden momentarily in apparently holding a double standard. Before his conditioning, blood and mess on the victim of one of his droog's "tolchocks" doesn't bother Alex: what disgusts him is blood and mess on a droog. "I didn't like the look of Dim," he explains. "he looked dirty and untidy, like a veck who'd been in a fight, which he had been, of course, but you should never *look* as though you have been" (pp. 17-18). Violence is okay if you don't let it touch you.

Burgess has also appropriated Salinger's recurring window motif as a symbol of the hero's suicidal impulses. After his fight with Stradlater, Holden says: "I got up and went over and looked out the window. I felt so lonesome, all of a sudden. I almost wished I was dead" (p. 48). A few seconds later, he confesses that every time he thought of Stradlater "giving it to" Jane Gallagher in Ed Banky's car, he "felt like jumping out the window." Like Alex who seeks a way of "snuffing it with no pain," Holden avers: "I'd rather push a guy out the window or chop his head off with an ax than sock him in the jaw" (pp. 89-90). After the disastrous encounter with the prostitute and the elevator operator-pimp, Holden again associates his death wish with a window: "What I really felt like, though, was committing suicide. I felt like jumping out the window" (p. 104). Holden's ultimate crisis comes upon reaching Phoebe, the one person with whom he has a satisfactory relationship. Phoebe presses him to name one thing he likes a lot. All Holden can think of are the two nuns (salvation) and James Castle who committed suicide by jumping out the window (death). Salinger here symbolically communicates Holden's simultaneous death wish and cry for help. He does it another way by introducing Mr. Antolini, Holden's favorite teacher. Significantly, Salinger tells us that it was Antolini who finally picked up James Castle, the boy who jumped out the window. Holden gravitates toward Antolini in the subconscious hope that the teacher can "pick him up" as well. Windows, then, become explicitly associated with death, suicide, and the terrible bottomless drop from that crazy cliff (ledge?) in *The Catcher in the Rye*.

It is Alex in *A Clockwork Orange*, however, who literally makes the jump. Like Holden, he too thinks and even dreams of "snuffing it," feeling that "death was the only answer to everything" (p. 140). Windows are passed through in *Orange* like an initiation rite before both Alex's visits to the hospital. The first window is the sash window above the old lady's front door. By jumping arrogantly through this first window, Alex seals his doom and starts the chain of events which leads eventually to prison and the hospital conditioning. The second drop through a window—a deliberate act of suicide—is itself signaled by a booklet which has an open window on the cover and the ironic words, "Open the window to fresh air, fresh ideas, a new way of living" (p. 164). Burgess has borrowed Salinger's symbol and given it literal as well as figurative usage.

Burgess's use of the window is not as rich or as subtle as Salinger's. Neither is his use of fantasy. In *The Catcher*, Holden's recurring fantasies of having a bullet in his guts (pp. 104, 150) are a very real clue to his true condition. He says, "I was *concealing* the fact that I was a wounded sonuvabitch" and we see that he is indeed wounded psychologically, not physically. In *Orange*, Burgess has Alex dream or fantasize like "clock-work," before every major movement in the plot. Yet these dreams do little more than foreshadow the coming event. Generally speaking, they are too obvious and too regular and they represent the weakest aspect of the novel. Burgess's dream sequences lack the subtlety and originality which make Salinger's fantasy episodes add a whole new level of meaning to the reader's understanding.

Burgess also appropriates Salinger's concept of a changing role pattern within his work's picaresque structure; but again uses it less subtly. Part of the humor in *Catcher* and the affection which the reader feels for Holden is due to the fact that we see him trying on different roles throughout the novel almost as regularly as he puts on and takes off his red "people shooting" hat. We first become aware of Holden's skill in role-playing through Salinger's judiciously framed back-to-back dormitory scenes in Chapters Three and Four where Holden talks first with Ackley and then with Stradlater. In Chapter Three, Holden plays the role of the busy, self-confident individual harried by a pest—Ackley. Holden complains of Ackley's toying with articles in the room, of his not stopping when he's asked to stop, and about his standing in Holden's reading light. In desperation, Holden tries yawning in Ackley's face to get rid of him. But come Chapter Four, Holden suddenly becomes an Ackley

figure to the self-assured Stradlater. It is Holden who plays with the water faucets and gets in Stradlater's shaving light. Furthermore, when he immaturity tries to wrestle with Stradlater and the latter tells him to stop, he ignores him. And since Holden is our narrator, we learn that in the role of pest he gets angry when Stradlater yawns in *his* face.

This switching of roles is carried on throughout the novel and has caused more than one reader to point out the inconsistency in Holden's fierce denunciation of certain behaviors which he himself in time is guilty of. Holden, for example, mentally condemns the three working girls from Washington for going to Radio City Music Hall. Later he goes there himself. On page 160, he expresses amusement over Phoebe's childish experiments with new middle names when earlier (p. 108) he does the same thing: Holden "Vitamin" Caulfield. While waiting for his former Whooton School friend Carl Luce, Holden tells us that Luce always talked about sex, particularly about "flits" and lesbians. But when Luce arrives, it is Holden who talks non-stop on the subject. Luce is shown as a mature, parental figure to Holden's immature child. "When in the *hell* are you going to grow up?" Luce demands of Holden (p. 146). Significantly for Holden's eventual rehabilitation, he is able to assume Carl's role when confronted with one even less mature than he—Phoebe. "What are you—a child, for God's sake?" he asks her (p. 164).

In fact, it is Phoebe's adoption of Holden's own postures which forces him to switch to the parental role. *His* dropping out of school and society doesn't trouble him, but when Phoebe announces her plan to play deserter too, Holden is appalled: "I almost hated her. I think I hated her most because she wouldn't be in that play any more if she went away with me" (p. 207). Likewise, Holden uses profanity imperturbably until Phoebe bounces this aspect of his image off him: "It was the first time she ever told me to shut up. It sounded terrible. God it sounded terrible" (p. 208). Phoebe also gives Holden a sample of the treatment he gave Mr. Antolini: ". . . and every time I sort of put my hand on her shoulder or something, she wouldn't let me" (p. 208). By reacting as the child she is, Phoebe gives Holden insight into the immature aspects of his own responses. He also is able to see these responses in the larger context which Antolini suggests to him when he says: "you'll find that you're not the first person who was ever confused and frightened and even sickened by human behavior" (p. 189). From Phoebe, Holden gains a kind of acceptance of the fall (the jump?) which has plagued him throughout the novel: "The thing with kids



is, if they want to grab for the gold ring, you have to let them do it, and not say anything. If they fall off, they fall off" (p. 211).

Burgess takes this subtle, rich, role-changing technique and makes it flagrantly obvious through the device of the mechanical conditioning which his book decries. Alex's confession that he is not the "little droog Alex" anymore isn't enough for the Secretary of the Interior who boasts that, "This young hoodlum will be transformed out of all recognition" (p. 93). The result, of course, is that Burgess has Alex undergo a direct about-face and the second half of the book reads like a flashback of the first with only the roles changed so that antagonist becomes victim and innocent victims, the brutal antagonists. In the final pages, Burgess then rights the roles again with Alex's "cure" and the photographers freeze *this* image once again. As with the window and fantasy symbolism, Burgess has taken Salinger's subtle device and made it brazenly conspicuous.

Both *The Catcher in the Rye* and *A Clockwork Orange* end with the hero rehabilitating in a hospital. Both novels also leave the reader pondering *Orange's* periodically repeated question, "What's it going to be then, eh?" Neither Burgess nor Salinger gives us an easy answer. With Holden we know at least that he's going to have another try at school in September. We also can take heart from his basic love of humanity as evidenced in his simple confession that he misses people, even "that goddam Maurice." Holden's continuous role playing leads us to hope that his searching will eventually pay off and he'll finally alight in the right role. Yet Salinger has Holden give us a realistic view to accompany our hopes. "A lot of people . . . [keep] asking me if I'm going to apply myself when I go back to school next September. It's such a stupid question, in my opinion. I mean how do you know what you're going to do till you *do* it? The answer is, you don't. I *think* I am, but how do I know?" (p. 213)

Burgess gives the reader even less to "know" about the future of Alex, now that he is "cured." The novel's conclusion has given rise to contradictory opinions among critics. Vincent Canby, reviewing the film version of the novel, states that the narrative comes full circle at the end.<sup>4</sup> The implication of this phrase is that Alex has learned nothing from the experience recounted in the book. This seems far from the truth for in the book's final pages Alex reveals an almost Hamlet-like skill in word-fencing with the state's leaders which indicates that he has profited from his past encounters. To the Minister of the Interior

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<sup>4</sup> Vincent Canby, *The New York Times*, Arts and Leisure sec., 9 Jan. 1972, p. 7, col. 3.

he says the enigmatic: "I am everyone's friend. Except to my enemies." "And who are your enemies?" inquires the minister. "All who do me wrong." (p. 173)

It is this quick-wittedness which has caused some readers to harbor hopes that Alex eventually will reform himself. Geoffrey Aggeler feels he will reform "partly because he [Alex] yearns for the 'harmless' pleasure of raising a family and partly because he simply [will become] bored with his own viciousness."<sup>5</sup>

Alex's future is, of course, irrelevant, especially in light of the thematic wallop packed by the book. Yet it is significant to note that, like Salinger, Burgess gives his violence-prone creation a number of moralistic postures. He does this particularly in the first chapter of the novel as if to gain reader sympathy for this otherwise highly detestable character. In the opening scene in the Korova Milk Bar when there are only three girls for the four "droogs," Alex thinks about "kupetting Dim a demi-litre of white but this time with a dollop of synthemesc in it," but decides "that wouldn't really have been playing like the game" (p. 11). Soon after, he offers the view that drugs are a "cop-out": "but at this time I'd got to thinking it was a cowardly sort of a vesch" (p. 11). And at the end of Chapter One, Burgess would have us feel that society is responsible for a large share of Alex's depravity when he has him say: "But, myself, I couldn't help a bit of disappointment at things as they were those days. Nothing to fight against really. Everything as easy as kiss-my-sharries" (p. 19). This, I suggest, counteracts Burgess's underlying point in *Orange*, that evil, as exemplified by Alex is an integral part of human nature. And it exists, I'm sure Burgess would insist, no matter what the social climate.

Burgess, then, seems to give his hero promising moral postures at his novel's beginning in order to enlist reader sympathy. Some hope, for example, can be taken from Alex's interest in hearing "what some of these starry decreps had to say about life and the world" (p. 20). But after these initial intimations, Burgess gives us little evidence of either growth or diminishing moral consciousness in the rest of the novel. After he introduces F. Alexander and his clockwork orange theory in Chapter Two, Alex becomes the crying voice of the individual—"And what about me?"—in place of a person with developing moral attitudes concerning others. I'm suggesting that Burgess cheated a bit here by planting germs of moral consciousness which he makes little reference to, and really has little use for

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<sup>5</sup> Geoffrey Aggeler, "The Comic Art of Anthony Burgess," *Arizona Quarterly*, Autumn 1969, p. 243.

later. Burgess's point in *Orange* is that Alex deserves redeeming merely because he is an individual; not because of any budding moral sensibility he may or may not show.

We do get a suggestion of the possibilities of Alex's reform through the character Pete. In the gang, Pete is the spokesman for peace and common sense. He makes pronouncements about right and wrong and pleads with the others not to "let ourselves down" (p. 34). Significantly, although we later hear of Georgie and Dim, Burgess never tells us what happens to Pete. Presumably he goes straight. And if he can reform, perhaps Alex can too.

Another possible future for Alex is suggested in his identification with F. Alexander, the fictional author of *A Clockwork Orange*. When Alex sees Alexander's book on the shelf, he exclaims: "Good God . . . he is another Alex" (p. 156). This may be Burgess's way of hinting that Alex's future may lie in becoming a spokesman for the organic individual in the struggle with the perpetrators of the clockwork society. Burgess is obviously having a little fun here with the two books with the same title and also when he has Alex comment that Alexander's *A Clockwork Orange* (like Burgess's own) is "written in a very bezoomy style" (p. 156). It is obvious, too, that Burgess's book (like Alexander's) celebrates the individual.

As suggested at the outset, in spite of the great similarity of components, *The Catcher in the Rye* and *A Clockwork Orange* are completely different works, particularly in representing those areas of interest which have traditionally separated the American and British novel. Salinger's novel is a psychological study with social implications. It is as much in the tradition of Henry James as Mark Twain. Burgess's typically British novel is concerned to a much greater degree with society and little at all with in-depth psychological characterization. *Orange* follows in the futuristic-utopian tradition of Burgess's countrymen, Orwell and Huxley. As Geoffrey Aggeler has pointed out, *A Clockwork Orange* "looks very much like a deliberate refutation of B. F. Skinner's *Walden Two*" (p. 241).

For his psychological study, Salinger has created a complex persona in Holden, a person who is capable of hurting others, and occasionally does, but one who is generally benign. Burgess, his eye more on social theme than psyche, has made *his* hero more into an allegorical representation of only half the human identity, that which chooses "evil." *A Clockwork Orange* really becomes a tract for Burgess's point of view concerning the inherent evilness of man yet, paradoxically, his superiority when



placed in opposition to society. "Badness is of the self," Alex explains, "the one, the you or me on our oddy knockies, and that self is made of old Bog or God and is his great pride and radosty. But the not-self cannot have the bad, meaning they of the government and the judges and the schools cannot allow the bad because they cannot allow the self. And is not our modern history, my brothers, the story of brave malenky selves fighting these big machines? I am serious with you, brothers, over this" (p. 43).

The "stunning moral" of *A Clockwork Orange*, as Daniel Talbot has written, is that "in a clockwork society, human redemption will have to arise out of evil."<sup>6</sup> The strength of Burgess's book lies in this paradoxical theme, in its richly beautiful invented language, and in the fact that Burgess has seemed to hit right at the heart of current social problems—our concern at the increasing mechanization of daily life and the seemingly simultaneous mushrooming of violence and crime. *A Clockwork Orange* seems more believable today than when Burgess published it in 1962.

Salinger was also ahead of his time in publishing a book in 1951, the hero of which represented a whole generation of young people disenchanted with and lost in the trappings of a materialistic, upward climbing society. Though more subtle, *The Catcher in the Rye*, also presents implicit social criticism.

Perhaps it isn't cricket to compare a novel and a tract, but then the latter term doesn't do justice to Burgess's wonderful fictional creation. Yet if one compares *The Catcher in the Rye* with *A Clockwork Orange* as novels, he can hardly help but call *Catcher* superior simply because it is infinitely more complex and subtle. One can also fault Burgess for centering the proof of his argument more on the mechanical breakdown in the conditioning method than upon the philosophical position regarding free will which he places in the character of the chaplain.

Robert Taubman touched on more than he realized, I think, when he suggested that *A Clockwork Orange* can be read as straight satire "on the indulgence of a good many current writers to their heroes."<sup>7</sup> As we have seen, Burgess seems to have adopted his character, setting, narrative technique, diction and even certain opinions from *A Catcher in the Rye*. Furthermore, he has adopted and then burlesqued Salinger's major symbols and structural devices. My guess is that Burgess, inspired by *The Catcher*, determined (consciously or uncon-

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<sup>6</sup> Daniel Talbot, *The New York Herald Tribune Book Review*, 14 April, 1963, p. 7.

<sup>7</sup> Robert Taubman, *The New Statesman*, 18 May, 1962, p. 718.

sciously) to borrow its parts and see if he could reassemble them in a completely original work of art which would, at the same time, serve as an admiring parody on one of his favorite writer's masterpieces. The juiciest "part" of all to borrow, and this fits in with Burgess's sense of humor as shown in *Orange*, is Holden's "Alec wandering in Londonland" description in *Catcher*. And a great irony in Burgess's skillful parody is his intimation that today's Holden has lost his innocence.

## Puzzler's Project

HENRY JANKIEWICZ

what then

if we know less than when we started  
where the truth lies

if we have chanced a handshake with the tar-baby  
of rime and reason

and nursed each poem like an egg  
to vanish in the air someday

what then

you saddle up a night-mare for the hunt  
with hawks that never go unhooded

and try to hatch it from thick knots  
of shade and shine

or drum it from the brush with beaters  
or snare its feet in rimes

longing all along

that it be a wild lark you chase  
and not a goose

# Cycle

JAMES K. BOWEN

In the early morning  
    it is my mountain—  
With its dark pine and black fir  
    twisting for life  
Out of the strangling manzanita growth.

The sun isn't over the exposed granite  
    rock yet  
And the night star begins to fade  
    and blend  
With the sky and the light air.

Two giant red tail hawks  
    catch the first spinning thermals  
Rising from the east side slope  
    of purple lava  
And start  
    their search for afternoon,  
When the heat of the day  
    will dry  
The close cropped summer grass  
    and send rabbits and rodents  
Pivoting under the shadows  
    of unhinged and sliding clouds—  
When wild nature  
    plays out its sustaining drama  
On a cyclical stage,  
    with each part according to cue.

I simply hope that the weathered men  
    on the far side of rat's alley  
Do not die before they learn  
    that twilight is just like morning  
And that dying only provides  
    life for the living.

## Elegy to S.

DAVID LOWENKRON

On the great suicides  
Your thesis was telling;

Cleopatra's asp  
Spoke to you,

But  
It was the smell of laurel,  
For that you tied sinkers  
To your ankle strings.

For laurel called  
From two seas &  
You wanted to die in laurel  
To sleep with algae  
To fade out in seaweed.

You dove  
Into the tube of author;  
Pulled out with sucker fish  
In your hair.

You who died for laurel  
What "light of her age"  
Flickers for a leaf?

You walked in narrow hallways  
With no floors.

I have read your books  
Like holes in black bread.

# A Miniature Folly

CAROLYN OSBORN

THREE LONG row boats full of men came steadily up the Thames to Westminster Pier. Each boat flew a flag so heavy it dragged the water. Alice Richards, waiting on the pier for a barge to leave for Hampton Court, squinted at the flags trying to distinguish letters and coats of arms. The sparkle of sun on water combined with a high wind rippling the material made it impossible for her to see complete designs. As they came closer she saw all the men wore white trousers although each crew wore different colored sweaters. No one surrounding her, not even the English tourists, could tell her who the rowers were, nor what they were doing on the river in July.

"Some kind of ceremony, I suppose," was the only answer she got to her questions, one which failed to satisfy her, but apparently satisfied the English woman who gave it. Their lives, she felt with the quick envy of an American abroad, were full of ceremony while hers was lacking. Since Sunday she'd been thinking it was not only her life that was lacking the richness of ceremony, but that she was also deficient in another way. Twice she'd been followed. At thirty-six she was still attractive, a slender woman with good legs, dark red hair, and eyes her husband described as "flaming blue." Men turned to look at her, which was pleasant.

The ones who'd followed her lately, however, were not pleasant. Little, short men with strange looks in their eyes were attracted to her. At the National Portrait Gallery she was surprised to see herself framed in a mirror among all the famous heads. The gallery's director was evidently aware of visitors' loss of identity when continually studying other peoples' faces. With the mirror she was reminded, these are only people marked by history; you are marked by your own, and if you are not immortalized by fame, here is your moment. Just between her



head and shoulders, a small moon-faced man smiled. Keeping one obsequious step behind her, he accompanied her to every room commenting on every portrait she paused before. She refused him a word until she could stand no more. In a doorway where a guard waited she turned to face her pursuer and quietly said, "Go away, please." She waited with the guard until he was gone. Coming out of the Victoria and Albert yesterday a stooped old man, his lips twisted in a contorted grin, had passed her on the sidewalk, waited until she'd passed him then had positively chased her into a cab. Alice shuddered at the memory.

Where did they come from . . . these sad, ugly people . . . what within her drew them? There are many beautiful women in London, and she was not that startling a beauty. Though she had friends living there, she was frequently alone. Was that what beckoned them . . . one solitary shining before another? She disliked her loneliness, felt it almost a stigma, but her husband couldn't come to Europe with her everytime and her friends couldn't be expected to accompany her to every museum. To have men glance her way, to be appreciated was one thing, to attract peculiar men was another.

She sighed and wondered if she looked older, more appealing to freaks, and at the same moment, self-consciously regarded herself a fool for falling into the tiresome attitude of a woman worrying about her age. One of the more irritating things about travelling alone was the chance of discovering appalling truths about oneself. At home, Alice reassured herself, she had a handsome husband. They'd produced two beautiful children and if there was anything fatally strange about her, she wished she knew what it was! She wished just once she'd be followed by a majestic male, an Adonis, instead of the reprehensible little men who had been slinking around after her.

She sat down on a bench and pulled her coat collar up around her face. The boat should be taking off soon. What were they waiting for? Behind her she heard men's voices. The crews from the rowboats were all tying on back and climbing aboard the barge. They seemed to be every age though none were terribly young and three wearing jackets were definitely hearty old men.

A man in a crimson sweater called to someone he knew up front, "Jerry, we'll be pushing off now." He and all his mates immediately disappeared into the saloon bar below deck. Jerry, standing on the pier, was just the sort who never followed her—tall, blonde, vigorous looking, well-muscled without being a muscle-man, handsome without being effete, and sure of him-



self. Looking over the boatload of tourists, he uncoiled the last loop of rope as he leaped on board. They slid under Westminster Bridge and past the Houses of Parliament. Alice gave up worrying about who followed her and began discovering London from the river. Should she take a picture of Parliament again? Ridiculous! She already had innumerable pictures taken on other trips, but this was the famous side, wasn't it? Must I always have the famous side? Compulsive photographer! Compulsive tourist! She took the picture, sat down and watched while wharves, piles of lumber, industrial underpinnings of the city quickly gave way to green banks and boat houses.

A rich bellow of singing male voices rolled up the stairway from the saloon. Alice said to the woman at the end of her bench, "I wonder who they are?"

The woman gave her a shrug which dismissed singers or any curiosity about anything. Alice found out she was an American from Chicago who had gotten tired of her tour and gone off for a whole day on her own. Unfortunately, she was lost on her own. She'd made arrangements to get to Hampton Court, but none at all for returning to London. Any interest she'd ever had was killed by anxiety. Of course she could return by the same boat, Alice suggested.

"Yes," the woman sighed. She had a lot of hair stuffed under a close fitting hat and her eyebrows had been plucked in two fine arched lines, yet the other lines of her face drew together in a series of shrewd wrinkles. Her appearance would have allowed her the role of a sybil, but she couldn't play up to it. "This boat," she moaned, "it takes forever and I go to the theatre tonight."

What sort of accent did she have? "Are you Italian?" asked Alice who had an immense curiosity. She would eventually furnish the woman information about trains to London from Hampton Court, but before she did she intended to find out a few things. Despite her prophetess face, the woman who was of Italian descent, turned out to be a lady interested only in pleasantries concerning the beauty of the landscape.

Alice was not at all intrigued by a running murmur of, "Oh, how beautiful . . . lovely . . . Did you ever see such trees?" She preferred talking to people who could tell her something she did not know, people wiser than she, or those who were personally compelling. If she couldn't find one of this sort, she preferred silence. Bored by the Italian lady, she went below deck and ordered a half pint of bitter and a sandwich. It was a small place with stairs at one end, bar at the other, seats and

tables against the walls, and it was full of men. Earlier she would have been timid; after two weeks in London she'd gotten used to walking into pubs by herself. No one would annoy her, or even try to start a conversation, but if she chose to she could. Never before had she chosen, but this time it was only natural to talk to a tall white-headed man.

"Would you tell me, please, what you are all doing here?"

"It's Swan-Upping Day."

"What?" The roar of voices and beat of the engine drowned out his reply.

"Come over here, dear." He led her to a table where everyone was dressed in crimson sweaters.

"You're an American, aren't you?"

Alice nodded. She would not mention she was from Texas as she'd learned the English were fascinated by mere size of the state as well as the cowboy myth. It took too long to disillusion them, and all efforts to do so were useless. Since she'd been abroad for several summers, she'd adjusted to the needs of Europeans. There really should be a place like the mythical Texas, a distant place where evil was overcome daily by men six feet tall, where either oil or cattle made everyone rich and vast spaces were open for new beginnings. The fact that it didn't exist was not important. Europeans knew that, joked about the clichés, yet still hungered for them. And, all the time she was among them, wasn't she searching for corroborations of her particular illusions, insisting on Camelot when it couldn't be found?

"What happens on Swan-Upping Day?"

"It's this way. We're going up the river to catch some swans and band them for the queen. Royal bird, you know. We're the Queen's Lightermen. We all work at the port."

"Like our longshoremen?"

"I suppose."

Language barrier. She was forever running into one. As usual Alice was frustrated over her inability to translate exactly.

"And the others?"

"The ones in the blue sweaters are the vintners, and those in white are the dyers. Guilds, you know."

"I thought swans were the queen's birds."

"They are, have been since the days of Henry the Eighth when he had to save them from the poachers. The guilds also got the privilege. The vintners make two cuts in the beaks, the dyers, one. They rub a bit of tar in to let the nicks be seen." He leaned forward smiling, enjoying his explanation.

Alice smiled back. She couldn't have been more delighted.

"The female is called a pen and the male, the cob. They mate for life."

"Like people," said Alice. Looking down at her hands she noticed the diamond in her engagement ring. Gross? Two carets. It had been her grandmother's. Gross or not, she liked it.

"Yes. Umm." He laughed. "You're married aren't you. Have another half-pint, dear?"

"Oh no, thank you. It makes me drunk."

"Does us all. I'm a little bit myself right now. Beg your pardon for anything I've done - -"

"You haven't done anything." How could he think he'd been offensive? Oh the English and their dreadful reserve! They were so often afraid of breaking down and becoming monsters! He acted as if there was a tiny round mirror at the bottom of his stein where he'd see his cheerful face transformed into a gargoyle glare.

"My name's Ned. Used to own a pub down in Southampton. Listened to the public talk all the time. Now I do the talking."

"Is it hard to catch the swans?"

"The old cobs can be tough—thrashing about in the water while you try to upend them."

"Only if you're an old cob yourself!"

Alice jerked her head up to face the young man who'd been standing on the pier.

"Go on, Ned, give the rest of us a chance."

"Get us another pint, won't you, Jerry?" Ned shoved the stein toward him.

"Only if you'll give up your seat when I get back."

"I'll not."

"It's unfair to keep her all to yourself."

"What's fair play got to do with it?"

Jerry leaned across Ned's back. "This old fellow will be deserting you at the locks. Will you have a drink with me then?"

"All right." Alice, embarrassed by the effects of wishful thinking, could barely look at him. He was only a boy . . . he couldn't have known her thoughts. Surely he'd been too far away to pick her out of the crowd sitting on the barge.

All three crews left at the next set of locks. Alice took their pictures as they clambered unsteadily into their boats. A slight breeze unfurled a flag behind Ned, flattened it so she could easily read the crimson letters, E.R. on a white background and above them, a crown.

The day, still bright and clear, was turning out to be

ridiculously romantic yet she wasn't fool enough to believe she'd stepped into the past. Henry the Eighth, swan-upping, royal birds, Queen's Lightermen in crimson and white were all very well; on the same barge there were at least twenty-five black school children on a field trip, a bewildered Italian-American lady, and a sour-faced Englishman who voiced his disapproval.

"Ah, they're all off getting drunk. Taking the day off, larking. Nothing but an excuse for boozing. They'll spend the night in some Duke's house and spend the rest of the year telling how grand it was."

"They'll spend all day chasing swans in rowboats," said Alice who felt the men in all three crews were marvellously robust, decent fellows.

"Their wings are clipped." The sour-faced man scratched his forehead irritably as though something itched, but he didn't know quite what.

"They'll still have to catch them and band their legs, nick the beaks."

"No." The man shook his head.

"You don't think they really—"

He shook his head again.

Alice subsided and shook her own inwardly. There was nothing to be done with such a sceptic . . . nasty sort . . . all too willing to condemn others for having a good time.

The swan-uppers' boats were a patch of orange against blue, then gone. There were more small houses on stilts on the banks now, doors at water level for boats, living space above outlined in white balustrades. Although they had a purpose, the boat houses appeared to be miniature follies surrounded by gardens. In front of one three small boys were trying to paddle a blue and white boat in three directions. Alice, thinking of her own children living in Texas which seemed more arid than usual at the moment, regretted they'd never have the casual pleasure of messing about in boats. Untrue, she warned herself, completely untrue. There was a lake only blocks from her house . . . man-made yes, created by bulldozers, yes, but water. And there were houses all around it, some just as fanciful as those by the Thames, more so as they were larger and more expensive. The comparison failed. The lake she knew was artificial, unlovely, surrounded by scrubby growth and stubby hills, cluttered with houses of either pretentious rusticity or pretentious modernity. The only thing in common was water and in Texas there was often not enough of that. Alice gave up, relaxed in the sun, reveled in technicolored memories of Henry



the Eighth sweeping up the river, and for once, did not accuse herself of being a tourist.

"You've forgotten me, haven't you?"

Startled out of her fantasies, she agreed to go below for a drink with Jerry. She hadn't forgotten him at all. His invitation, she'd thought, was only part of the chaff with Ned, not to be taken seriously. To her he was something of an apparition, too handsome to be believed, and far too young to be interested in her.

There was no one below but the barmaid, a girl about twenty, already tough looking with bleached blonde hair, a wisp of a mouth set in an ironic curve, and heavy hips cased in blue jeans. She waited on them then began mopping the floor as if it were an ancient enemy she could never stab to death.

"Are you in school?"

"Me?" He let her know her question was incredibly naive. "Not me. I quit to go to work when I was fifteen. My family's worked on the river for four hundred years."

She was not certain what her family had done for four hundred years. Some could be traced through a variety of occupations for about two hundred. Before that even their names were obscured in a haze of emigration.

"Where do they live?"

"Up here. Up the river across from Hampton Court. Isn't that where you're going?"

"Yes." Alice drank her bitters and kept her eyes on the barmaid who was slamming chairs upside down on tabletops.

Abruptly, Alice asked, "How old are you?"

"Twenty-eight."

She shook her head.

"How old do you think I am?" He slid closer.

"Twenty-two?"

"Twenty-four."

"How old do you think I am?" Alice smiled wryly. Her age would surely put him off.

A boy clattered down the stairs and sat next to Jerry. Approximately the same age, but not as filled out, the look on his face was knowing, as if he'd come upon an old friend up to old tricks.

"Here's Trimmer. Have a drink with us."

"No. I've had enough already."

He seemed to be saying, "Haven't you?" But Alice sat fascinated.



"This is Alice. I'm guessing her age. How old do you think she is?"

"Thirty." Trimmer's eyes were full of laughter.

"I'm years older."

"Looks like a girl. Has a figure like one doesn't she. Look at her!" Jerry raised his stein toward her.

Alice had a momentary look at herself standing naked on the table revolving slowly before them wrapped in a knitted dress she'd just discovered was provocative.

"Thirty-six." Jerry's voice was quickly sober.

Alice nodded. Nailed to the table, intimidated by his perception, she couldn't have moved if she'd wanted to.

"Go out with me tonight. I'll take you round to my places in East London. Show them to you."

"I . . . I can't." She despised herself for stuttering.

The barmaid hoisted chairs back down to the floor as if she were wrestling with recalcitrant bodies.

"Why not?"

"I'm married."

Jerry laughed with fine free carelessness. "What does that matter! He's not here is he?"

"No. He's not."

"Where is he?" Trimmer had enough sense to ask.

"Back home. In America with the children."

"That's what he tells you."

"He tells me nothing." We tell each other nothing. There's never been a reason to lie. Has there? What is he doing? Alice was caught up in a tissue of questions she hadn't thought to ask herself for years. Her husband stayed at home because he had to work . . . wanted to . . . preferred to. She amended the idea as she considered it. What had been acceptable became inexplicable.

"I believe . . . Perhaps I choose to believe him."

Both boys looked at her then Jerry said, "Come out with me tonight. There's no harm in it."

"I can't." She spread both hands down flat on the table.

Trimmer stared at them, and Alice, aware of his eyes on her hands, wondered what he saw there.

"Are you rich?"

"Rich?" She looked up quickly then back down at her rings. On her left hand she wore two large diamonds, on her right, an emerald surrounded by diamonds. "No. I inherited some of these. You don't have to be rich to come to Europe anymore."

Jerry picked up her left hand and twisted round the dia-

mond that had been her grandmother's. "You look rich. You know what we'd do if we found you on the bottom of the Thames?"

Trimmer answered for him. "We'd cut that hand off."

"Really!" Alice pulled her hand out of Jerry's.

They both assured her they would. Ahh . . . they were only playing tough, trying to scare her weren't they? She couldn't be sure. If that was the game though, she refused to be frightened.

"You're coming out with me tonight," Jerry insisted. "If you don't, I won't be able to hold my head up in front of my mates."

"Tell them I said you were too much of a man for me to handle." Alice listened to herself with faint belief in tactics of obvious flattery.

He turned to Trimmer. "What does she mean?"

"You've scared her," Trimmer said as if he didn't believe her either.

The boat stopped at a landing and Trimmer went upstairs. Against the wall on a bench the barmaid was stretched out staring at the ceiling.

"There are other girls on board." Alice offered.

"I know. I've got my eye on one." He nodded toward the upper deck.

"Ask her then."

"It's you I want."

Alice stood up. She didn't know what to do with him. She hardly knew what to do with herself. "I'm going up."

"When we get to Hampton Court, wait for me."

"I can't. Thanks for the drink." She climbed up the stairs, drifted back to an empty seat in front of the Italian lady and gazed out at Henry the Eighth's deer park beside the river. How incredible! To be thirty-six and sixteen at the same time, and to have learned nothing in between! To be chased, run and hope to be chased again. It was all the same, just as it had been twenty years ago. Why was it impossible for her to invent a variation? No matter how she thought about her situation, nor which way she reasoned, she returned to the certainty she was unreasonably attracted to the boy. She sat down on the bench, her body bent forward, her arms wrapped around her waist as if to hold herself back.

It was all an accident, her being on the boat, talking to Ned, being available to Jerry. She was only passing through. He was only a boy who worked on the river. East London . . .

Petticoat Lane . . . Billingsgate Market, the Tower. That's all she knew of it. Was it mostly a working class district? What was that part of the city really like? A night going round to pubs with Jerry? Leave the rings at the hotel . . . shouldn't look like she was slumming . . . or married. The Italian lady patted her on the back, asked if she had a stomach ache and Alice, tormented by the absurdity of desire said yes, she did.

When the barge arrived at Hampton Court landing she tried to lose herself in the mass of people surging off. There was only one way to walk through and Jerry was standing on the shore.

"Wait for me."

Alice shook her head and went past him.

He shouted something at Trimmer and followed her. "Walk with me? Just walk?"

Alice looked around. Sun shone hard on everything. The path was broad and open. There were few trees to hide behind and no tall grass to sink into. "All right."

He tried to take her arm, but she pulled away. Walking beside him she realized he was heavy, not fat, but solid. His intent was as strong as his body. They went down the path away from the barge.

"Why won't you go out with me?"

"I've told you. I'm married."

"That's nothing to do with it. Sit down."

Alice noticed many couples sitting on the grass.

"It's full daylight. I'm not going to do anything. Sit down and talk a minute." He pulled gently at her arm.

She folded her legs under her, felt grass pricking her stockings and was ready to cry at the weakness of her flesh and her wavering will. Never, never should she have agreed to take two steps in any direction with him for he took that agreement for consent.

Sprawled on the grass beside her, he pulled at her arm once more. "Lie down."

"I will not." She sat up stiffly.

"You don't want to get to know me then?"

In this she heard an often used complaint and could almost laugh. "Not in the way you want me to. Try to understand. There's nothing in it for you." Each word was given full weight, pronounced slowly and distinctly. As she said them she knew she lacked all goodness. An interior prompter, not a voice, but a barely sensed emanation, demanded protection. Her survival, not her marriage, was in question. She was not afraid of what

he might do with her, of his taking her life or stealing her rings, but she feared self-forgetfulness.

"All right. No hard feelings." He helped her up and showed her the quickest way into Hampton Court's grounds.

She spent the afternoon wandering about palatial rooms. Their walls were covered with pictures and tapestries, and in the middle of nearly every third room was an enormous empty bed. Turning away from these she looked out of tall windows over prospects of fountains and formal gardens to shimmering reaches of water. Outside she passed through a garden thick with roses blooming so fully they were an embarrassment. Flaunting color, beauty, brevity, they waited for the nearest wind to shatter them. "Oh, how could you?" she murmured to the roses and to herself.

She was busy taking the usual picture of the lion and unicorn on top of the entrance posts when she saw the Italian lady. A few moments later when they were crossing the bridge on their way to the train station together, Alice looked down at the barge waiting at the landing. Of course she could not see Jerry. At that distance it was impossible to discern anyone.

## For Submarie

(a hippopotamus, at the Philadelphia Zoo)

CHRISTINE HOFFNER

In thirteen years of wading,  
what has changed?  
The stagnant water floats the peanut shells.  
My mate is still the same preponderant lump.  
He rears for grandmas' clicking cameras  
and grinds his mossy jaws.  
The tank's too small for two; and when we bump,  
I stumble on the slimy tile,  
while all the people  
roar and point, "Look out!"—  
as if I'd reach to grasp  
their sticky hands or laughing speech.

Sometimes at night  
I nuzzle at the trough  
of doctored meat the keeper leaves,  
and take the pool steps quietly.  
I slip mouth-deep along  
the satin black-edged surface,  
all alone,  
and watch the stars  
submerged by trees and clouds.



# Dialogue With A Dead Marxist

DAVID POSNER

*The guilt that arises from what men do is small and scarcely compatible to the guilt that arises from what men fail to do.*

—Christopher Caudwell

1. We always travelled away from the sun  
to be rich like God  
and inherit ourselves.

The darker the stairs the clearer the dream.

I draw the curtains as I climb  
holding the light back,  
increase a moderate speculation.

Here is a sack of grain  
estimated for Thursday  
when it has gained three points.

I am stained from buying dark northern Spring  
(Nu Tone high 26½ low 26),  
flung headlong by a zealous nightmare  
into the Proletarian cellar  
under the expensive carpet.  
I walk so quietly  
the cat grows jealous.

2. You rode to death in a soldier's lorry.  
Marry? you said.  
Keep up a wife and home which read like a  
book full of patience for the middle class:  
'poor dear muddled so-and-so,  
solitary, discontented, ambitious.'

3. Yesterday I cleaned out the attic, found your  
volume on the decadence of culture  
which sounded like a love letter  
now after thirty years:  
    "You don't understand anything,  
    mysterious, arbitrary in your gestures,  
    Imperialist in the war,  
    liberal Fascist you  
    loathed the workers,  
    denied Marx  
    proud of your eclectic mishmash:  
    psychoanalysis, comparative religion.  
    You refused to grow old,  
    always kept my house away from your house,  
    never liked crowds;  
    no genuine furniture in your room,  
    only a picture window."

Darius, my sad Persian, whiskers and all,  
is it really you  
crying at night in the vacant lot?

4. Once upon a time the odour of a rose  
preceded the rose;  
    or if people could see reason  
    as one sees a flower at midday.  
Now I sit indoors  
casting no shadow.  
    A redeemer in a glittering aeroplane  
    will put things right from above.  
    Only the dead overthrow governments:  
    the rest of us go on living.
5. What beating of wings  
thought makes!  
returning to the nest,  
    hiding in a tree:  
    no possible action  
    unless you call a tree  
    a social necessity.

Today I slammed the shutters,  
wrapped in a thick coat;  
marched against snow,  
my route in rough weather  
a few straight phrases  
warming themselves inside me  
like the chances of an early spring.

Your ghost began to stir again,  
carving a Spanish epitaph:  
*here lies my blood,*  
*and moves in innocence;*  
*driven by the wind from wordless heights.*  
*It flows down the mountains like water,*  
*it is lighter at last than stone.*

## Marginalia . . .

(continued)

*But language cannot be used dishonestly only at will. Fall into the habit of using language inaccurately and you will eventually be victimized by your own slovenliness. You will have so mistreated your own tools that you will never be able to drive the nail straight even when you want to. Language cannot be separated from thought. Those who choose vague words and empty jargon to suit their purpose will find that their sloppy language leads inevitably to sloppy thought and eventually to sloppy action—which brings us to Watergate.*

*Once you get the hang of using language to manipulate reality, you can pursue unspeakable actions without actually speaking about them. You do not have to be evil or corrupt to do this. In fact, it may help if you are deeply convinced that "God is on our side." The philosophy which made it possible to use language to manipulate public opinion in an election will not desert you in the face of mere criminal acts.*

*After all, a criminal act need not smell the same given another name. Do you wish to burglarize, steal, bribe, and blackmail in the name of the government? It cannot be done! But, on the other hand, if you wish to institute covert operations for the purpose of intelligence gathering in the interests of national security, that is certainly a matter for which funds can be made available (in unmarked cash, of course.)*

*The so-called "cover-up" actually began before the burglary itself. It was the unintentional cover-up in layers of euphemistic language so successful that even those involved among the White House staff were unable to see the ethical dimensions of their actions. The habit of slovenly language had made it impossible for them to make clear distinctions; they themselves had got lost in their own smokescreen. They were reduced to feeble mutterings such as "I misspoke myself" and "that statement is no longer operative."*

*Once again the truth has been demonstrated that those who attempt to use language to deceive may find themselves the ultimate target of their own deception. That statement at least remains operative.*

—John Keenan





## CONTRIBUTORS

**C**LAUDE KOCH has won numerous honors for his fiction, though he started his writing career as a poet. The portfolio of poems in this issue marks his return to his first love. Koch was one of the founders of this magazine; he is Professor of English at La Salle College. ANNABEL THOMAS has had stories in *Epoch*, *Prairie Schooner*, and the new *Bastian Review*. She is currently completing a novel. HENRY JANKIEWICZ is a graduate student at Syracuse University making his second appearance in *Four Quarters*. BARBARA SEVERIN-LOUNSBERRY teaches at the University of Northern Iowa at Cedar Falls. Previously she was a drama reviewer for the *Waterloo Courier*. Her article on poet Mona Van Duyn appeared in the Fall 1971 issue of *The Iowan*. JAMES K. BOWEN teaches at Southern Oregon College and edits *American Literature Abstracts*. His poems have appeared in numerous little magazines. CAROLYN OSBORN is a part-time teacher at the University of Texas, full-time mother of three, and regular contributor to literary magazines, including *Texas Quarterly* and *Descant*. Her first novel is currently making the rounds of publishers. DAVID LOWENKRON is a New York poet making his first appearance here. CHRISTINE HOFFNER is a student at La Salle; we are pleased to present her first published poem. DAVID POSNER's poems appear in *New American Poetry*, edited by Richard Monaco (McGraw Hill, 1973), and he has been widely published in periodicals. He reports that "Dialogue" was revised with the help of Robert Bly.

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